

## Bus Provides Orphans "Vehicle" out of Poverty

The purchase of a bus for the Idritsa Orphanage with an RCWS grant in May 2002 made the cover of two local Russian newspapers, the *Pskov News* and *Pskov Pravda*. The acquisition of a minivan was in fact a momentous event for the 140 inhabitants of the orphanage, which is situ-

ated in a rural locale 90 miles from Pskov. Now, the orphans have a real opportunity to avail themselves of the educational, professional and cultural resources in nearby towns and cities. The orphanage social worker informs us that the prospect of taking trips in the van has engendered a previously unseen excitement among the children.

Trips to more populated areas will allow the children to gain experience performing the most mundane of tasks: making a purchase in a store, going to the post office, sending a telegram. In a thank you letter to RCWS, one little girl wrote us: "Since we now have a

minibus, we can go to other places more often. I have a brother who lives in Pechory. Maybe we can take a trip there and I can visit him." The orphans themselves clearly understand the value of the minibus, which might include helping this young girl maintain a family connection.

Orphanage administrators will now be able to cultivate contacts with prospective professional schools and colleges as well as potential employers for the children. The van's maiden voyage transported 12 senior students to a professional trade school in Velikiye Luky, where the new orphanage graduates met with the director and instructors. We expect that such trips will now become a regular part of the children's preparation for post-orphanage life.

RCWS was pleased to support the purchase of the minibus, given its many constructive uses and its relatively small

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 5*



Idritsa orphans proudly display their new bus



## Petroushka Ball 2002: An Evening of Legends

The 37th Annual Petroushka Ball at the Plaza Hotel was, without a doubt, the most spectacular in recent memory.

Co-chairpersons Mr. and Mrs. Serge Ossorguine did an outstanding job making the Ball a great success and helping to bring attendance to a record total of over 700 dinner and dancing guests.

The Grand Ballroom, decorated in beautiful accents based on the Firebird fairytale, provided the backdrop for performances by opera greats Dmitri

Hvorostovsky, Elena Obraztsova, and Anna Netrebko. Their sublime interpretations of mainly Russian romances riveted the entire audience.

RCWS President and opera aficionado Vladimir Fekula arranged the presence of the three singing sensations, who were in New York preparing for the Mariinsky Theatre's acclaimed production of *War and Peace* at the Metropolitan Opera.

In addition to this stunning musical highlight, students from the Kozlov Ballet Academy performed "Le Jeu avec des Pommes d'or" from Stravinsky's *Firebird* while the more than 350 dinner guests

enjoyed a delicious menu of French and Russian fare. After dinner, the fabulous Lester Lanin Orchestra enticed guests to the dance floor. Two balalaika ensembles

provided additional entertainment in adjoining rooms, further purveying the spirit of Russian culture until the evening's end.

The Society is grateful to Beatrice Fekula for collecting a wonderful assortment of raffle prizes, and to Tania Penkrat Tolstoy for designing the beautiful table decorations. The Society extends its thanks to ball patrons, guests and other sponsors whose support of this event translates into life-giving rewards for many children. We are looking forward to Petroushka 2003!



Anna Netrebko



Elena Obraztsova



Dmitri Hvorostovsky

## RUSSIA TO HOST ITS FIRST-EVER TRAINING SYMPOSIUM ON CLEFT LIP AND PALATE IN DECEMBER 2002

Of the over 5,000 children born with facial deformities in Russia each year, 30-40% suffer from cleft lip and palate. While Russia is divided into 89 regions, there are only 25 major regional hospitals where children with facial deformities can receive proper care. Unfortunately, most primary cleft surgeries are conducted at local hospitals by general surgeons who do not have specialized training in cleft care operations.

Since December 2000, The Smile Train has sponsored surgeries for over 230 children at two of the most prominent hospitals for facial reconstructive surgery in Russia: the Moscow Medical Stomatological University (MMSU) and Moscow Center for Children's Maxillofacial Surgery.

Recognizing the value of providing advanced training to medical professionals in cleft care operations, RCWS and The Smile Train are now organizing a training symposium entitled "New methods of comprehen-

sive treatment and rehabilitation of children born with cleft lip and palate." MMSU, the main training hospital on facial deformity corrections in Russia, will host the intensive two day symposium on December 5 and 6th, 2002, in Moscow. The Russian Ministry of Health has taken an active interest in this effort. The last such symposium in the former



before surgery...

Soviet Union took place over 30 years ago.

Over 250 cleft care providers from throughout Russia will participate in the conference, receiving training from leading doctors and scientists in

Russia and the Newly Independent States, as well as foreign specialists. The organizers of the symposium will also publish a collection of essays based on symposium presentations, which will be distributed to all participants.

The objectives of the symposium are to inform and train doctors in effective methods of cleft treatment, increase professional communication and collaboration among cleft care providers in Russia, and make recommendations to the Russian Ministry of Health to improve accepted procedures in cleft care.



...and after

We also hope that the symposium will help RCWS and The Smile Train identify additional partner hospitals, and provide quality medical assistance to even more children with cleft lip and palate in Russia.

## Pennies from Heaven Petroushka on the Hudson 2002

The Russian Children's Welfare Society held its second "Petroushka on the Hudson" dinner and dance cruise aboard the World Yacht Princess on June 6, 2002. Our gracious and generous guests braved the rainy weather to turn out in support of needy Russian children. The music of a balalaika band and the Lester Lanin Orchestra entertained attendees, while the cocktail hour and dinner buffet menu provided a gustatory delight for all on board. The newly crowned Miss Universe, Oxana Fedorova, was also in attendance, adding an extra sparkle to the evening.

**Thank you to all participants in this event!**



Vladimir Fekula and Miss Universe

## RCWS Forms Moscow Advisory Board

The Russian Children's Welfare Society has recently formed an advisory board in Moscow, consisting of both American and Russian professionals, who will offer suggestions and guidance concerning our work in Russia. Thus far, the following individuals have volunteered to join the board: Irina Kudrina, wife of the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister; Katya Schidlovsky, a Russian American residing in Moscow, who is involved with charity work; Dr. Natasha Shaginian, Director of Happy Families International; and Andrei Zolotov, journalist for *The Moscow Times*.

We thank advisory board members for their interest in helping the Society improve and expand the quality of its programs in Russia.

## RCWS Welcomes New Board Member

Michael Jordan, the eldest son of Mary and the late Alexis Jordan, was raised in Sea Cliff, New York. He started his business career in 1983 working in various managerial positions in the foreign exchange markets in New York and Toronto. In 1993, he accepted a position with Cargill in Geneva, Switzerland where he was instrumental in developing an Eastern European emerging market investment capability. Michael and his family later moved to London, where he was co-head of emerging markets trading and sales for Banc Paribas. While in Europe, he spent a considerable amount of time in Russia. In 1999, he returned to the United States to head up sales for the Agent Department of Mizuho International USA, whose parent is the largest bank in the world.

Michael is active with the St. George Pathfinders, a Russian scouting organization, having served as a counselor and as a Director. His sister, Katya, is on RCWS's Moscow Board of Advisors. He resides in Bergen County, New Jersey, with his wife Catherine and children, Andrei and Kira. We welcome Michael as a Candidate Director.

## Response to the Crisis in the Caucasus

Kislovodsk, located in the Northern Caucasus, had always been a popular tourist destination, known for its natural beauty and the curative effects of its spas. Due to its close proximity to the war ravaged regions of the Caucasus, however, Kislovodsk is now home to a large refugee population. Sadly, eight terrorist acts committed in the nearby town of Mineral'nye Vody in 2001 reminds the local population that their distance from the hotbed of troubles is shrinking.

The St. Nicholas Classical School, marking its ten year anniversary in 2002, is a bright spot in Kislovodsk. There is indeed much reason to celebrate, reports RCWS representative Alla Torgalo. The 192 students enrolled at the school are receiving a quality education that includes academic subjects as well as practical coursework, i.e. computer training. All instruction aims to instill values in the children that will help them make positive choices in their lives. As a result of the school's strong offerings, all graduates of the ninth class who sought transfer to other educational institutions last year success-

fully passed entrance exams.

Keeping the St. Nicholas School supplied with teaching materials, furniture, food, and medical supplies is a formidable task. Whereas the St. Nicholas Cathedral had previously offered financial support to the school, it must now devote its resources to the growing number of displaced people in town. RCWS has supported the St. Nicholas School for several years, and allocated \$8,500 in 2002 for food, computer equipment, textbooks and other supplies. The Society also wishes to



Vladikavkaz orphans with food and clothing delivery

acknowledge Mr. and Mrs. Serge Timasheff for making targeted contributions to the school through RCWS.

Like Kislovodsk, the social service sector in the Northern Ossetian city of Vladikavkaz is feeling the burden of the nearby turmoil. From 1997 to 2002, the number of orphans in Vladikavkaz has grown from 520 to 700. The poverty of the region means that many orphanages lack sufficient means to purchase food, clothing, bedding, school supplies, and toiletries. Fortunately, the Vladikavkaz orphanages have managed to survive through the friendship of RCWS donor Toni Russin, who has offered consistent financial support for several years. The orphans always note their gratitude for her help, without which hard times would be even harder.

RCWS representative Dmitri Penkovsky is also to be commended for facilitating the purchase and shipment of goods made possible by Ms. Russin's support. RCWS and its partners are trying, in even the smallest of ways, to mitigate the crisis in the Caucasus.

## Inspiring Troubled Children through the Arts

For three years, the Russian Children's Welfare Society has supported the Inspiration Rehabilitation Center, located in the tiny hamlet of Nikolskoe Gagarino outside of Moscow. The Center runs a variety of classes to help three different groups of children: patients from the local children's psychiatric hospital diagnosed with psychiatric disorders and other mental disabilities, orphans from institutions in the Moscow oblast, and children from troubled families in nearby communities.



Fr. Ilya in front of new Inspiration Center

The Center was the vision of Father Ilya Dorogoychenko of the Church of St. Nicholas in Nikolskoe Gagarino. He oversaw the renovation of a suitable facility to hold crafts workshops, music lessons, tutoring, and other educational activities. While those who attend the Inspiration Center can clearly be classified as "problem children," Father Ilya firmly believes that caring adults can help them to cope with their problems.

The curriculum at Inspiration includes several well-conceived programs that boost the children's self-esteem, bolster their cultural knowledge and instill positive values. One program is called "Ethics and Culture" and is comprised of a series of theme-based discussions and exercises. One lesson, for example, is entitled "The Artist as Prophet," and incorporates the poetry of Pushkin and paintings by Levitan and Cezanne. Another multi-week project called the "Theatre Workshop" introduces the youngsters to different types of theatrical performances and the technical and artistic aspects of staging a spectacle. The children learn by writing their own



Children display their craft work

monologues and dialogues on specific topics, and put on a play for their friends and acquaintances at the end. Inspiration uses art to arouse an awareness of beauty and an altruistic spirit in the program's participants.

Inspiration helps approximately 80 children a year, who range from 9 to 18 years of age. Father Ilya would eventually like to expand the capacity of the Center to increase the number of children that can benefit from its offerings, and add a dormitory and gymnasium. We applaud the work of the professional and kind-hearted staff at the Inspiration Rehabilitation Center.

## Creative Rehabilitation for St. Petersburg Youngsters

The "Our Help" Foundation is one of the most distinguished charities helping disabled children and orphans in the St. Petersburg region. The Director, Elena Ovchinnikova, displays an unequivocal dedication to these youngsters, tirelessly marshalling the human resources and fiscal means necessary to run solid programs year round.



"Our Help" participants with their art work

Art therapy is the most prominent curricular component of "Our Help's" programming. Encouraging participation in the creative process has proven an effective tool for helping children who have experienced an undue amount of hardship to cope with emotional stress. "Our Help" arranges visits by artists to various orphanages and homes for blind and deaf children, and organizes different celebrations for Easter, New Year's holidays and birthdays throughout the year. Striving to help even the most isolated of children, "Our Help" makes sure Ded Moroz delivers presents to homebound invalid children.

The swelling number of abandoned children has imposed a severe strain on the many already overcrowded and often dilapidated orphanage facilities throughout Russia. In Rybinsk, a town located five hours from Moscow in the Yaroslavl oblast, seven new orphanages have appeared since 1995. One of these, Orphanage #79, was opened five years ago in a building designed as a kindergarten during the Khrushchev era. Shoddy construction, combined with poor maintenance during the last forty years, has compromised the safety of the structure. The flat roof is unable to adequately withstand the abundant amount of precipitation of the local climate. As a result, severe leakage problems have damaged ceilings, creating a real threat of collapse and endan-



Learning computer applications

Thousands of children have furthermore benefited from excursions to cultural institutions such as the Hermitage and the State Russian Museum, and the parks and palaces of Peterhof, Gatchina and Pushkin on the outskirts of St. Petersburg.

In January 2001, the Foundation acquired newly renovated space at the Center for Creative Rehabilitation, where drawing, design and computer classes are held, and the children also exhibit their



Happy youngsters on an excursion

work. This site also provides a place to hold innovative projects such as "We Draw a Song." Earlier this year, notables from the Russian music world, including Alexander Rosenbaum, Vyacheslav Butusov, Maksim Leonidov, and Yuri Shevchuk of the rock band "DDT," performed for the children. After the performances, the youngsters interpreted the songs' motifs through drawing and painting. Their work was later exhibited at the "House of Friendship," where the singers reappeared and selected their favorite pieces.



Children gather around Yuri Shevchuk, DDT

Exposing the children to various artistic media is a great way to stimulate their creative spirit. Exhibiting their work joins them to a society from which, due to their disabilities or status as orphans, they feel alienated. RCWS has given grants to "Our Help" for four years to support the many quality endeavors mentioned above. We are indeed proud to be working with such a fine and reputable organization.

## RCWS RAISES ROOF IN RYBINSK



Pre-repair condition of roof

gering the 57 children who live in the orphanage intended for only 30 inhabitants.

In March 2002, RCWS answered the orphanage's request for assistance with a \$10,000 grant to rebuild the roof. An "a-frame" roof, which will facilitate proper drainage of rain and snow, is currently being installed. The shape of the new roof will also afford the orphanage more space to create additional living quarters for the children. These critical renovations will also help keep the orphanage warmer and drier and have a favorable effect on the children's health. Once the roof is completed, orphanage administrators can concentrate on further cultivating programs that help the children develop emotionally, spiritually and academically.

## BATTLING THE SCOURGE OF HOMELESSNESS

The Way Home Shelter in Moscow has been trying to alleviate the problem of homeless children since 1992. The shelter's progressive leadership looks to western models of care for offering assistance to the homeless, and openly advocates foster care for children from abusive homes rather than placement in an orphanage. The staff creates a familial atmosphere at the shelter, where professionals try to restore the children's physical and mental health, define their legal status vis-à-vis their parents, and determine where they will go once they leave the shelter.

Many of the children who enter the shelter come from homes ravaged by violence, neglect, and alcoholic parents. Sleeping in abandoned buildings or eating out of dumpsters further damages an already brutalized psyche. One shelter resident, a six-year old girl, was running around and fell down, accidentally dirtying her dress and the doll she was holding. Her reaction was to bury her head in her



Children making friends at the shelter

neck, expecting that the nurse coming to assist her was going to slap her across the face. Clearly, helping former street kids overcome untold trauma is a long-term project.

The first step in helping a child recover from homelessness is perhaps the simplest — a full medical examination that most often reveals various skin conditions, malnourishment, scars, frostbite, evidence of beatings, respiratory conditions, etc. Once it is determined that the child poses no danger of spreading communicable diseases, the young client is integrated with the approximately 40 other children in the shelter and receives psychological counseling and educational support. The staff also makes inquiries as to whether a child can be successfully and safely reunited with the biological parents or relatives.

In the last year, the Shelter started to provide training and support for would-be adoptive parents, who learn effective strategies for raising formerly homeless

children. Way Home also incorporated a preventive social work and legal assistance program that helps forestall homelessness among children and families in crisis.

A grant from the Russian Children's Welfare Society, made possible through the generosity of Raisa Scriabine, has helped underwrite these very important initiatives.

The Way Home Shelter believes in returning former street children to their family when possible. In the future, the Shelter would like to also offer joint lodging and counseling for mothers and their children. The program would help parents to find employment or battle alcoholism to strengthen the foundation necessary for successful reunification. The Shelter also aims eventually to add special housing for children whose situation remains unresolved after the initial six month period of residence, where they would be nurtured and educated in small groups of 8. The Shelter would furthermore like to acquire a specialized hostel for teens between the ages of 15 and 20 where social workers, psychologists, and other educators do their best to keep them from falling prey to the lures of the street.

In January 2002, President Vladimir Putin finally decried the abundance of homeless children in Russia as a national shame. Hopefully, more funding and support for social service providers will become available to battle this serious problem. In the meantime, the Way Home's comprehensive approach serves as a model and provides a beacon of hope for the street children of Moscow.



Shelter Director Sapor Kulianov with former street kids

## Bus Provides Orphans "Vehicle" out of Poverty

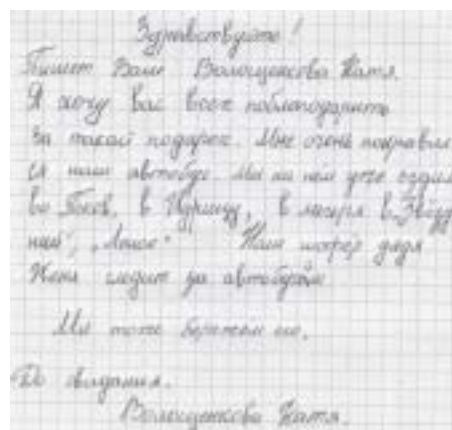
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price of \$8,000. But the Society's involvement does not end there. In July, we authorized a \$9,200 grant to help build up the orphanage's vocational educational program which includes sub-departments specializing in agriculture, painting and plastering, sewing, and cooking. In 2001, RCWS helped the orphanage to purchase new sewing machines to replace the horribly outdated fifty-year old models that the children had been training on. Gaining experience on modern equipment will give the children a real chance to find work or

go on to local professional technical schools where they can gain further skills in a chosen profession.

Our support of the Idritsa orphanage reflects the Society's new policy of helping children's organizations that are trying to give children the skills necessary to successfully assimilate into broader Russian society. We will track the results of our support at the Idritsa orphanage and hope to replicate positive initiatives at other orphanages. We have already allocated funds for the purchase of a minibus for the Pavsk orphanage, which is also located in the Pskov region, and aim to help the administration to install a solid

vocational training program there as well. We look forward to reporting our progress to you in the coming months.



## Maria's Children: Teaching the Art of Humanity

In 1993, Maria Yeliseyeva, a painter from Moscow, was introduced to a few orphans at Orphanage No. 103 in Moscow. She and some of her friends started to visit the orphanage regularly and eventually began to teach drawing and painting to the children. These visits evolved into a non-profit organization called "Maria's Children" that specializes in art therapy classes for over 200 orphans and disabled children in the Moscow region each year. Children attend classes in art, batik, needlework, and sewing at the organization's bright and festive studio.

Maria's devotion to the project stems from her deep love for children -- she has four of her own as well as three adopted kids. She regards all children as creative and sensitive human beings who are capable of growing into respectable adults when properly nurtured. Maria also believes, however, that a



Maria and her children at the studio

critical aspect of a child's development is to learn to serve and show affection to others.

To give orphans the opportunity to develop a sense of social responsibility, Maria's Children has organized a group of volunteers to travel each week to a baby orphanage in Malakhovka, a town just outside of Moscow. The youngsters have painted murals of clouds and rainbows on the walls to de-institutionalize the atmosphere. They also give individualized attention to the babies, most of whom the limited staff do not even know by name. The gains are mutual for the babies, who receive the stimulation they need to develop normally, and the volunteers, who derive self-esteem through their acts of kindness.

For the last three years, Maria's Children has run a floating summer camp on a riverboat between Moscow and St. Petersburg. The campers enjoy art classes and have the extraordinary opportunity, given their disadvantaged background, to explore Russia. Professionals from the clowning organization founded by the American doctor Patch Adams are also on board to work with the children. The children also disembark at various points along the route to visit orphanages and homes for sick children.

Many of the children who have participated in programs at Maria's Children are reaching an age where they must make the transition to life outside of the orphanage. Maria and her staff are now trying to get



Patch Adams clown with sick child

additional vocational training for teenagers so that they are not shuffled into a subsistence wage factory job. Some of the teens are taking cooking classes, participating in intensive arts classes, and attending driving/mechanics school so that they can seek out employment in areas of interest to them. The idea is to offer additional support to these children once they are independent.

Maria works tirelessly to bring attention to the plight of Russian orphans and has organized numerous exhibits of their artwork in Moscow. The children's work has also been exhibited in New York, Minneapolis, Seattle, and in Washington, D.C., where there was a display at the rotunda of the United States Senate. This year, the Russian Children's Welfare Society is supporting the efforts of Maria's Children with a \$5,000 grant to purchase art supplies and food for the studio. RCWS President Vladimir Fekula met with Maria in Moscow in December 2001 and was duly impressed with her compassion and active advocacy on behalf of orphans and disabled children.

## RCWS Grant Helps Hearing Impaired Youngsters

Specialized School #483 is the only educational institution for deaf and hearing impaired children between the ages of 14 and 20 in Moscow. Each of the 220 students undertakes a course of study that leads to careers, such as automechanics, tailoring, and design. The school also aims to help the youngsters improve their oral communication capabilities with the "hearing" world. A dedicated cadre of teachers, psychologists, information specialists and engineers use their expertise to create a constructive learning environment.

Marta Mikhailovna Grakhova, a Russian actress who is deaf and enjoyed a long and distinguished

career in the Pantomine Theatre, has been a great asset to the school. She teaches students about the principles of theatre and



Actors perform for students

the actor's craft, and helps them stage various plays. Participation in the theatre helps hearing impaired children gain self-confidence in their abilities to communicate. Ms. Grakhova is the Director of a new theatre for deaf actors and is also actively involved in the Russian Society of the Deaf.

In September 2001, RCWS authorized a \$7,000 grant toward the purchase of specialized equipment for the school. This equipment helps the students to correctly interpret different sound signals and overcome deficits in hearing. As the children are better able to express themselves, their attitudes improve as they feel less isolated.

## RCWS Grants to Russia in 2001

1. **Idritsa Specialized Orphanage, Pskov** – grant for a minibus. RCWS also approved grant to strengthen the vocational training program at the orphanage and purchase equipment for sewing, agricultural, painting/plastering and cooking classes.
2. **"Krug" Rehabilitation Center for disabled children and their families, Moscow** – grant for supplies for vocational workshops, textbooks, food, and medical assistance.
3. **Orphanage #79, Rybinsk** – grant toward roof repairs.
4. **Five Orphanages in Vladikavkaz: Orphanage for Disabled Children "Laska," Vladikavkazsky Orphanage, Mozdoksky Orphanage, Orphanage No. 1 with Treatment Facilities, Vladikavkaz Republic Orphanage** – grant for general support made possible by contribution from Toni Russin.
5. **Rehabilitation Art Center "Maria's Children," Moscow** – grant for art supplies and food.
6. **Russian Orthodox School, Tutaev** – grant for supplies and equipment for art, sewing, and cabinetmaking workshops; food; and renovation of school facilities.
7. **"Preodolenie-L" Center for Vocational and Creative Rehabilitation of Disabled Children, Moscow** – grant to cover food expenses for 65 children.
8. **St. Nicolas Classical School, Kislovodsk** – grant for computer equipment, textbooks, supplies, medication, vitamins, and food for 192 students.
9. **"Inspiration" Rehabilitation Center, Nicolskoe Gagarino** – grant for equipment and supplies for workshops, transportation expenses, and food for children.
10. **Children's Russian Orthodox School, Avraamlev Monastery, Rostov** – grant for textbooks, maps, office supplies, and food.
11. **Baby Orphanage, Kaliningrad** – direct contribution from Mr. and Mrs. D'Amico and family for rehabilitation equipment and food for children.
12. **Pavsky specialized orphanage, Pskov region** – grant for a minibus.
13. **Orthodox Scout Center, Moscow** – grant toward expenses for summer camp exposing children to Russian history and culture.
14. **The Department of Pediatric Facial Surgery at the Moscow Medical Stomatological University** – grant for specialized computerized equipment that will improve diagnosis of patient's treatment.
15. **St. Alexis School and Orphanages, Novoaleevka** – grant to purchase a minibus, washing machines and dryer, and for the completion of shower facilities for children (grant from RCWS and Mr. Brett Byers).
16. **Charitable Foundation "Our Help," St. Petersburg** – grant will help "Our Help" organize educational and cultural outings for orphans and disabled children to various museums, parks and palaces in the St. Petersburg region. The grant will also underwrite some of the expenses of "The Child's Soul," an Art Rehabilitation Center where the children participate in art projects and exhibits.
17. **Novomoskovsky School and Orphanage #2, Tula Region** – grant for the physiotherapy and sporting equipment.

## In Memoriam: Irina Gizhitskaya 1922-2002

RCWS is saddened by the loss of Irina Gizhitskaya, who represented the Society's San Francisco office for over forty years. Owing to her tenacious character and devotion to Russian children, Irina continued to serve as President through many years of illness until her death earlier this summer.

Irina Gizhitskaya was born in Poznan in 1922, losing her mother when she was only three years old. Her father was deported to Siberia when the Red Army occupied Poznan in 1939, and died shortly after his return to Poland in 1954. Irina was uprooted during the tumultuous years of World War II and continued her education in Germany, where her only option was to become a surgical nurse for the German war effort. After the war, she ended up in a camp for Russian displaced persons, and made her way to the United States in 1950. In 1951, she married Lev Gizhitsky, who was also very involved with the RCWS San Francisco branch and passed away at the end of last year. The birth of their two children, Olga and Mikhail, filled out the Gizhitsky household. After the children had grown, Irina decided to complete her education at San Francisco State University, and eventually pursued a Master's degree.

In addition to their work for the Society, the Gizhitskys were very active in scouting and took up leadership roles in Russian camps, creating innovative programming and training camp instructors. Both loved skiing and hiking in their younger years, attending Russian balls and the philharmonic, and were always noted for their hospitality.

The RCWS New York office sends its condolences to the friends and family of Irina Gizhitskaya.

## Monitoring Grant Distributions

The Society has put in place a thorough system of checks and balances to make sure grants are used for their intended purpose. Organizations must first of all provide us with a complete application detailing the project for which they are seeking support, as well as a budget. Successful grantee organizations receive an official agreement from RCWS that specifically states the dollar amount of the grant and how it is to be spent. Russian banks will not authorize the release of these funds without such an agreement and furthermore require invoices from grantee organizations that match the items or services designated in the agreement.

The Director of our Moscow office visits grantee organizations to check up on the project's progress. The Society's representatives in Russia, as well as RCWS Board members, also make periodic visits. Organizations are required to submit timely mid-year and final reports that detail expenditures and project achievements. The Society will not renew its support without this documentation.

## How You Can Help

The Russian Children's Welfare Society is a US based nonprofit organization with 501 (c)(3) status. The Society relies on private donations to support its various programs. Directed funding opportunities are also available. If you would like to make a donation, please send a check or money order to the Society's office. For donations via credit card, please call the office at 1-888-732-RCWS.

## Announcements

### PETROUSHKA BALL

The annual Petroushka Ball will be held on Friday, February 7, 2003, at the Plaza Hotel. Please contact the Society for sponsorship, tickets, or additional information.

### SPECIAL THANK YOU

The Society appreciates Dmitri Schidlovsky's help in designing the Petroushka Ball program and RCWS brochure.

### RCWS WEBSITE

For updates on the Society, please check our website [www.rcws.org](http://www.rcws.org)

### THANK YOU

Through the efforts of Peter Tcherepnine, the Society was the beneficiary of a \$10,000 bequest from a private estate. Many Russian children will be helped through this gift.

RCWS thanks all of its donors who share in our accomplishments.

### RCWS STAFF CHANGES

The Society announces the departure of bookkeeper Nancy Kurolapnik and Tricia Rattigan, Director of Development. We

thank them for their good work. We are pleased to welcome Zhanna Petrenko, our new bookkeeper.

### REMEMBER THE SOCIETY

As so many have done in the past, please remember the Society in your Will. Our legal name and address are:

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New York, NY 10003

Your attorney may contact us at:  
(212) 473-6263



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### RCWS NEWS

Vol.7 Fall 2002

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*RCWS NEWS* is published by the  
Russian Children's Welfare Society

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